

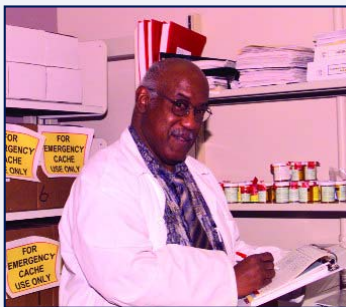
North Chicago VA News



North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

February 2004

NewsBits



***Herschel Ryales** (our investigational pharmacist) has been invited to be part of an expert panel of Pharmacists who have gone through the NCQA process, to advise and prepare other VA pharmacists for their NCQA audits. He was selected because the North Chicago VA pharmacy scored all possible points on our accreditation.

***SPRING INTO HEALTH** - The First Annual All Employee Wellness Fair will be held Tuesday March 23rd from 7A.M. to 5 P.M. Watch for details.

***Academic Affairs Service** introduces their new lecture series titled **ADVANCES IN MEDICINE-SURGERY-PSYCHIATRY** for physicians, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners and resident/fellows. is held on the first Tuesday of each month at 12noon to 1:00pm in the Nursing conference room Bldg 133CA rm 3D 105H. The series has been accredited for 1 hour Continuing Medical Education (CME) for Physicians by the CME committee of FINCH/CMS. The next lecture will be held March 2 and is titled: Management of Hypertension Speaker: Jen-chieh Cheng MD, Chief of Nephrology VAMC, NC Professor of Medicine FUHS/CMS.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration

From Tragedy to Victory was the theme of the speech of Ms. Sherialyn Byrdsong at the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration held in Bourke Hall on Friday, Jan. 16, 2004.

Ms. Sherialyn Byrdsong is the widow of Ricky Byrdsong, the former Northwestern University head basketball coach who was murdered by a white supremacist on July 2, 1999. In Ms. Byrdsong's first public statement after Ricky's death, she stated, "The violent act that took my husband's life is yet another clarion call to our nation...Wake up, America! ...This is not a gun problem, but a heart problem." Since the tragedy, Ms. Byrdsong has become proactive in



the work of racial reconciliation. Ms. Byrdsong has spoken at the White House with President Clinton in support of federal hate crime legislation. Ms. Byrdsong serves as a voice of conscience to inspire courage, humility and compassion for all. Through her words, Ms. Byrdsong made a lasting impression on those in attendance at the program. Musical selections were performed by Beatrice Scorby and Matt Hunter, students from Evanston Township High School. A special thanks is extended to the members of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee for the memorable program.



North Chicago News

North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to douglas.shouse@med.va.gov
Contributors for this issue:

Octavia Davis
EEO Specialist

Mary Schindler
Consumer Affairs

Nancy Gember
EEO Specialist

Doug Shouse
Executive Assistant

Kenny List
Community Affairs

John Snyder
Employee Education

Charles Mims
Learning Resource
Center

Mary Waterman
Learning Resource
Center

New North Chicago Leadership Development Program (NLDP)

January 22nd marked the kickoff of the first annual North Chicago Leadership Development Program (NLDP). This year's selectees are Debi Bourdo, James Burch, Sharon Jerome and Colleen Smoger.

The program is centered on the High Performance Development Model and is part of an ongoing effort to prepare highly motivated individuals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to assume positions of greater responsibility. The focus will be on developing leadership skills, as opposed to management or supervisory skills. Candidates may be in either clinical or administrative positions and must be full time employees of the North Chicago VA Medical Center.

The participants meet once a month, throughout the year, for formal classroom lectures and discussions. Many local staff members have volunteered to provide presentations in their respective areas of expertise. Each participant will be assigned a mentor who's job it is to guide them through the Personal Development Program (PDP) process, with an



North Chicago Leadership Development Program Participants for this year include from left: Debi Bourdo, Program Coordinator, Compensation and Pension; Colleen Smoger, Administrative Assistant, Patient Services; John Snyder, Instructor, Employee Education; Sharon Jerome, ADP Coordinator, Medical Administration Service; James Burch, Computer Specialist, Informatics.

emphasis on honing their leadership skills. So let's congratulate them all and wish them a productive and rewarding year.

This training opportunity is offered to employees for their own personal

and professional development. Selection for the program will not impact on an individual's current position or grade, nor does participation guarantee selection for any future promotion opportunity.

Octavia Davis Selected As The New Manager Of Occupational Health & Safety



Octavia Davis is an Occupational Health & Safety Professional by Education and Training who began her career in the field of Health & Safety at the Edward Jr. Hines VA Hospital in Hines, Illinois in 1987. She has over 17 years of specialized experience in Occupational Health and Safety that

includes positions as Occupational Health & Safety Technician, Occupational Health and Safety Specialist and Occupational Health and Safety Manager. Octavia comes to the North Chicago VA from the Chicago Health Care System where she managed the Health &

Safety programs at the Lakeside Campus, Westside Campus and the Adam Benjamin Jr., Outpatient Clinic in Crown Point, Indiana from 2001 to 2003. During her tenure at the Hines VA Hospital and Chicago VA Health Care System Medical Center, Octavia received 16 consecutive Outstanding Performance Awards and many

Letters of Commendations from internal and external services and regulatory organizations. She currently holds many certifications in the field of health and safety. In October 2003, Octavia and her husband celebrated 18 years of marriage. They have four children, which includes a set of four-year-old twins. She is a member of the Prayer and Faith Outreach Ministries, where she currently holds a position in Ministry Leadership. She is a prayer warrior, a praise & worship leader and co-president of the Marriage Ministry.

Corrections

In the January 2004 issue, the following sentence was inadvertently left out of the Strategic Planning Activities article written by Peggy Beyer on page 2. "The membership for these teams is currently being formulated. If you would like to become involved, please contact Ms. Peggy Beyer, Chief, Outreach/Facility Planning at ext. 81247." The North Chicago News apologizes for this error.

Exceptional Customer Service Stories

Story 1: On Saturday, December 27, 2003, one of the two vehicles that pull the food carts from Building 6 to Buildings 131 and 133 stopped working. On Sunday, December 28, 2003, the second transport vehicle started to move very slowly. The supervisors, Ms. Corrine Chancey and Ms. Anita January knew they had a problem and tried to reach someone in Maintenance so they could get a truck to transport the food carts. Being a holiday weekend, no response was received until 4:30 p.m. The supervisors enlisted the help from food service workers, Mr. David Jones, Mr. Yale Burdine, Mr. Mark Morin, Mr. Eddie Bell, Mr. Wilbert Reed and Mr. Samuel Moore from Engineering who volunteered to help push the food carts from Building 6 to the outer buildings. The food was delivered and served on time as the result of good team work. Thank you for your determination and hard work to ensure the food was delivered when the carts broke down. This is a true demonstration of rolling up your sleeves and working as a group to provide excellent customer service.

Story 2: Dorothy Sharky, Med Tech received flowers and a thank you card for great service. The card reads: "To the ladies and gentlemen of SPD...Thank you for your warmth and kindness you shared with us this week. God bless and take care!" What an outstanding demonstration of customer service and putting individual's needs as a priority. Thanks to everyone for the great work and being a positive reflection on North Chicago VA Medical Center!

Story 3: We received a letter from a veteran expressing his feelings about the care he receives from the North Chicago VA Medical Center. The letter reads: "When you first examined me prior to my colonoscopy, you asked me why I was getting medical service from VA while I get medicines slightly cheaper on my private insurance plan. I responded that I get pretty good care from VA. Let me elaborate.

VA makes sure that my inoculations are up to date. Even though I saw my private physician at regular intervals, the tetanus shot had not been administered for over 35 years. There is regular notification about things like the flu shots.

The N.P or P.A., at the Evanston clinic regularly checks for discrepancies between medicines and lab results. This led to my being taken off of metformin for diabetes control because of decreasing kidney function. Since I no longer had the muscle pain, I am able to exercise more and keep my blood sugar under control.

When something questionable or suspicious is noticed, a specialist consultation or lab examination is

scheduled without my having to worry about whether my insurance will cover the cost. For example, when I mentioned the bulge on my right side, you immediately examined the area and scheduled the CT scan. My private physician more or less ignored the problem for several years.

My medical records are brought together in a way that permits any of the practitioners who work with me to find what they need. Yet have no trouble getting lab results, either for my own use or to give to my private physicians. On the other hand, I have trouble getting lab results from my private primary physician, who sometimes even neglects to send them to specialists to whom he makes referrals. He is squeezed from the time to do paper work by the insurance carriers and health care provider company which dominates much of northern Cook and southern Lake counties.

My major concerns with using VA are the unpredictability of funding and the difficulty of traveling to North Chicago. The care is quite good."

This letter demonstrates that the staff at North Chicago VA Medical Center as well as Evanston CBOC will ensure that we work with the veteran for his care, communicate and listen to the veterans concerns, and provide quality care.

Congratulations to the staff at North Chicago VA Medical Center and Evanston CBOC by providing exemplary service to this veteran. Keep up the great work because it definitely pays off!

Story 4: We received an email from John Geraghty, VA Hines, who was asked to pass on a message from a satisfied customer to the entire staff at the North Chicago Medical Center....

It all began when Mr. Geraghty was speaking with a gentleman at the church he attends. Mr. Geraghty stated that he works for the VA. Shortly thereafter, this veteran stated he has been seen at our facility several times over the past several years and that he is very satisfied with the quality of service he receives. Mr. Geraghty didn't get any specifics but stated that this patient is confined to a wheelchair. It's encouraging to hear such approval of the VA. Job well done!!

Dornaya Kelley Federal Woman's Program Scholarship Recipient



The Federal Women's Program Annual Scholarship Luncheon was held on Jan. 22. This year's Scholarship Award recipient is Ms. Dornaya Kelley of Patient Administration Service. Ms. Kelley has been employed at this medical center for the past nine years and is currently the ward secretary on 131-3A. Ms. Kelley is enrolled at the College of Lake County with plans to earn an Associate Degree in Computer Information. According to Ms. Kelley, her goal and life long dream is "to earn a college degree and to teach my children that hard work and perseverance toward your education, hopes and dreams always pays off in the end, no matter how long it takes." Congratulations Dornaya!

Helena Snizcer Receives Secretary's Hands & Heart Award



Each year VA honors an employee at each Veterans Health Administration facility who has demonstrated particular dedication and compassion in the delivery of patient care. Ms. Helena Snizcer, NA, recent retiree, was selected as a staff member at our facility to receive the Secretary's 2002 Hands and Heart Award. The Medical Center Leadership presented this award to Ms. Snizcer on Monday, February 9, 2004.



North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

National Salute To Hospitalized Veterans

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans was celebrated at the North Chicago VA Medical Center during the week of February 8-14 with the help of staff, volunteers and visitors. Perfectly timed to coincide with Valentine's Day, the same sentiments of caring and sharing match the salute's purpose of expressing honor and appreciation to our veterans. Throughout the week, over 2,500 valentines, cards and letters poured in from classroom students, newspaper readers and others



thanks to the initiative started by columnist, Ann Landers and "Valentines for Vets". Local schools and scout groups visited patient wards to personally hand out valentines and treats. The Girl Scouts Service Unit 710 from Great Lakes (pictured) once again decorated beautiful special gift boxes filled with goodies for our veterans. The 6th grade students from the Skokie school in Winnetka (pictured)



sponsored a bingo for the veterans in Bldg 134. They put lots of effort and hard work into planning every detail themselves including the prizes and refreshments. The youth from the United Protestant Church of Grayslake (pictured) also distributed gifts to vets in the nursing home. Pizza parties were sponsored on all of the wards by Community Affairs and by the VA Voluntary Service volunteers. The veterans also received lots of candy, cookies and snacks.